



Universitat de Lleida

Document downloaded from:

<http://hdl.handle.net/10459.1/64933>

The final publication is available at:

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08831157.2017.1321336>

Copyright

(c) Taylor & Francis Group, 2017

The ‘Indignant’ Pilgrim: Cultural Narratives of Crisis and Renewal in the 15M Movement in Spain

Carles Feixa ¹

University of Lleida, Catalonia, Spain

ABSTRACT

On Saturday 23rd July 2011 Guillermo, a young student from Lleida (Catalonia, Spain), who had been camping out since the beginning of the 15M movement, arrived in Madrid after walking over 450 km, in one of the 6 columns which had crossed the Iberian Peninsula during the previous weeks. The “Popular Indignant March” had been conceived as an original way of rounding off the occupations of hundreds of squares throughout Spain, their objective being Puerta del Sol in Madrid, the first square to be occupied. On the way, which was from the urban periphery towards the centre, passing by the rural Spanish plateau, the population's claims and complaints were to be gathered and taken to the agora of the participatory democracy. The experience of having groups of people walking from different origins with a common destination evokes the classical anthropological experience of the religious pilgrimage. Spain's best example is the *Camino de Santiago*, which has attracted thousands of pilgrims from all over Europe since the Middle Ages. When we ask Guillermo about this parallelism, he denies any spiritual content, although his account of *Camino de Sol* is like the fulfilment of a civic promise, the ritualization of a festive and revindicative appropriation of the territory, the colonisation of a *terra incognita* which they had taken over two months before, on 15-M, when the *hashtag* #spanishrevolution became a trending topic within the social networks. The article relates this experience to the narratives of the 15M movement and to the situation of young people in Spain in times of crisis.

KEYWORDS

15M, *Indignados*, Youth, Social Movements, Crisis, Pilgrimage.

¹ CONTACT: Carles Feixa. Professor of Social Anthropology, University of Lleida. Pl. Victor Siurana, 1. 25003 Lleida (Catalonia-Spain). Email: feixa@geosoc.udl.cat.

Introduction: On Narratives, Crisis and Renewal ²

The crisis where the elements for solution cannot develop at the necessary speed makes it all the worse; whoever dominates cannot solve the crisis, but they have the power to prevent others from solving it. (Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, 1718).

... temporal and spatial determinations are inseparable from one another, and always coloured by emotions and values (Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogical Imagination*, 243)

In the 1930s, during the time spent in jail under Mussolini's regime, Gramsci had outlined some novel reflections about the so-called "*quistione dei giovani*" (youth issue). In the first of his *Quaderni*, apart from quoting the ideological manipulations that the cult for the young can entail (as the quotation in this section shows), the lucid thinker suggested taking into account the "class interference" that sometimes explains youth dissidence:

The 'old' generation always carries out the education of the young. There will be conflict, disagreement, etc., but these are superficial phenomena, inherent to any educational mission... unless they are class interference, i.e.: young people (or an important part of them) in the ruling class (understood in the wider sense) rebel and pass to the progressive class that historically has been able to seize power (...). When the phenomenon has a national scope, when there isn't any open class difference, the question gets complicated and can be chaotic. Young people are in a permanent state of rebellion because they persist in defending their deeply felt causes, and there's no room left for analysis, criticism or problem solving (not just conceptual and abstract solving, but historical and real solving) (115-6).

Phenomena like mysticism, sensuality, indifference or violence don't have to be attributed, therefore, to youth's inner nature but to the changing historical contexts that determine the emergence of the crisis of authority. The concept "crisis of authority" takes us to another core concept by Gramsci: hegemony. Understood as the capacity of ethic political steering, more through consensus and ideological control than through force, hegemony has a lot to do with the 'youth issue': on the one hand, education of the new generations is fundamental for reproducing a hegemonic work (and also for the

² This article is part of the research project named CRIC – *Cultural Narratives of Crisis and Renewal*, European Union (H2020-MSCA-RISE-2014-645666). It is also indebted to the project GENIND – *An Indignant Generation? Space, power and culture in the youth movements of 2011*, Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness (CSO2012-34415). It was presented to the CRIC quick-off conference (Newcastle, UK, June 2015). I am grateful to Teresa López for the translation from the original Spanish text, and to Jorge Catalá and Patricia Oliart for their comments to the first version of the manuscript.

articulation of anti-hegemonic projects); on the other hand, young people play a relevant role as paradigms of the “crisis of authority”, which is really highlighting the “crisis of hegemony”:

Crisis consists in the death of the old when the new can't be born: in this intermediate period the most varied pathologies can be seen (...). This is linked to the so-called 'youth issue' determined by the “crisis of authority” of the old steering generations and also by the mechanical obstacle over the ones who could steer to carry out their mission (311-2).

As “the old dies and the new cannot be born”, and as politics are expressed in cultural terms, the diverse forms of youth protest and dissidence, the changes in their lives and values, can be interpreted as one of the privileged indexes of the “crisis of authority”. Hegemonic classes will describe it in terms of “materialistic trend”, “moral dissolution”, and the new generations –or the most visible sectors amongst them- will be identified as responsible, or as the scapegoat of social instability. These are situations that announce “the possibility (and the need) of forming a new culture” (312). This new culture assumes a new set of forces for the exercise of hegemony. This innovating character may be one of the distinctive features of youth cultures: while popular cultures have historically been identified by their “rebelliousness in the defence of tradition”, youth cultures have appeared, since WWII as “rebels in defence of innovation” and have given place to the creation of new cultural forms that respond in different ways to the changing conditions of urban life. That is: youth became a “metaphor for social change” (Hall et al., *Resistance through rituals: Feixa, On youth, gangs and tribes*).

Gramsci's ideas will guide us throughout the narratives of crisis and renewal in the 15M Movement in Spain, using the concept of chronotope proposed by Mijail Bakhtin. The chronotope can be understood as the categories of time and space constituting a fundamental unity in the human perception of everyday reality. This constituted timespace unity in the perceived construction of our world lies at the basis of every narrative text. This unity inheres in neither space nor time specifically, but in both,

together, and in relation to the subjects' narratives. Certainly the Bakhtinian conceptualisation of chronotope is not homogeneous. In his writing he offers descriptive, metaphorical and analytical uses of the concept, applied to literature and art, but open to (social) science. In fact there is a difference between the original formulation of the chronotope in his essay "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel" (1937-38) and his influential "Concluding Remarks" added 35 years later (1973). In the later work Bakhtin starts by recalling that the chronotope is always subjective - "colored by emotions and values" (243). Then he situates "the significance of all these chronotopes" on at least four different levels: (1) they have narrative, plot-generating significance; (2) they have representational significance; (3) they "provide the basis for distinguishing generic types"; and (4) they have semantic significance (250).

Youth lives are inscribed in specific times and spaces that are interwoven; thus, situatedness and transcendence are correlative in the existential sense. There are three ways in which the chronotope can be used for the study of youth cultures: (a) as a methodological approach consisting of "reading the society through life stories," in (local) youth contexts, and according to young people's temporal narratives; (b) as a theoretical approach to analyse (national) youth cultures, in supra-local contexts, according to collective temporal memories; and (c) as a strategic way to understand the emergence of (global) youth networks, according to new conceptualizations of space and time. Our approach through chronotope focus on the interpretive knowledge of young people that needs and breeds creativity, because "the relationships contained within chronotope (...) are dialogical" (251-2). The dialogic chronotope is an analytic portal that connects (local) events, (social) memories, and (researcher) imagination with our actual subjects of study – young people and youth cultures. The basis for a non-

fictional extension of the concept is provided by Bakhtin's claim that "every entry into the sphere of meaning is accomplished only through the gates of the chronotope" (258). The chronotope is a discursive-practical heuristic that signals the interpretive nature of existence.

This article will follow a particular narrative of crisis and renewal, based on the experience of a young man who participated in the "*Indignados*" or 15M Movement in Spain. The narrative is focused in a condensed timespace: the "*Marcha Popular Indignada*" (Popular Indignant March) that occurred in July 2011 as a celebration of the end of the Camps. This civic pilgrimage will be read as an attempt to move from crisis to renewal, from a personal and at the same time from a collective point of view.

***El Camino de Sol*³**

Caminante no hay camino, se hace camino al andar. (*Walker there is no path, the path is made when walking*) A. Machado. (#marchapopularindignados, 25/07/11)

Vamos despacio pero vamos lejos. (*We're going slowly but we're going far*) (Banner for the *Marcha Popular Indignada*)

On Saturday, 23rd July 2011, Guillermo, a young Student from Lleida who had been camping out since the movement had started in his hometown, arrived in Madrid after walking 315 km in two weeks in one of the 6 columns that in those weeks had crossed the Iberian Peninsula. The so-called *Marcha Popular Indignada* (Indignant Popular March) had been conceived as an original way of closing the occupation of hundreds of squares all over Spain, and had the target of Puerta del Sol in Madrid, the first occupied square, and the km 0 of all national roads. On the way, which somehow was from the urban periphery to the centre, crossing the Spanish rural plateau, the reality and the

³ We have analyzed more in detail the narratives of the 15M Movement in the context of the crisis in Feixa et al., 1-12; Soler, Planas and Feixa, 62-78; Fernández-Planells, Figueras and Feixa, 1287-1308.

needs of the population were to be collected and brought to the agora of participative democracy. In each one of the stages of the journey assemblies were called and local demands were gathered in a notebook that the marchers kept, and that was to be handed to the Congress at the end of their journey.⁴

We meet with Guillermo on March 1st 2012 at the college where he studies. Earlier he warns us that he might be late; he's gone to an eviction for a mortgage debt in a working class area in Lleida. Thanks to the solidarity of the platform for People Affected by Mortgages (*Afectados por la Hipoteca*), the eviction finally doesn't take place). The interview takes place at the Students' Council office, very active those days because of the student strike the day before (students took to the street in demand for public education and in solidarity against the police repression in Valencia). The office is full of things from the demonstration, banners, newspaper cuttings and a series of aphorisms from different thinkers, which constitute a reflection of the ideological magma nourishing the movement: Saló, Kant, Marx, Bakunin, Durruti, Camus, Stirner, Malcom X, Chomsky, Porto Alegre, Athens, etc. The most interesting part of the interview focuses on the participation in the *Marcha Popular Indignada*. Just like modern secular pilgrims, the indignant walkers made their path when walking, through the villages in Aragon and Castile, echoing the popular revindications (that Guillermo was gathering in his notebook). On July 22nd they got to Madrid and on the 23rd they

⁴ Congressman Llamazares delivered a selection of the notebooks to Congress during the session of July 27th 2011. It's inevitable to compare this with the *cahiers de doléances* from the 1789 French Revolution that congressmen collected throughout France and took to the Constitutional Assembly, in which the bad government and perversion of feudalism were denounced. Although for Guillermo, the most direct comparison was with Ché Guevara's *diarios de motocicleta*, notebooks of complaints from further away in geographical terms, but nearer in generational terms.

entered into Plaza del Sol, triumphant and exhausted, where they were received by the Madrid indignants.⁵

Figure 1a. The Indignant Pilgrim. Photo by Carles Feixa (2012)

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/60vsb8seow9bidy/1a.jpeg?dl=0>

Figure 1b. Slogans at the Students Union Office during the interview. Photo by Carles Feixa (2012)

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/1zjg1fhhdugj9x/1b.jpeg?dl=0>

The Indignant Pilgrim's Narrative ⁶

My name is Guillermo and I am a member of the 15M movement in Lleida. Before the 15M I hadn't really been in any organization, I was in a few volunteer programs, I was a youth worker for immigrant children for extra school activities, and then I was in an association for the physically impaired. This was during secondary school, then I joined a vocational training degree on social integration, and this is how I got into the social environment. My family are middle class. My mother is from Cuenca, my father from Ciudad Real. My parents came to Lleida for work reasons, and well, I was born here. I am the only Catalan in the family. I live in a suburb.

I really started with the campaign "*No les votes*" ("Do not vote for them"), a mobilization through the internet. I did not have contact with anyone here, so I acted on my own, hanging posters in College, trying to make people aware, encouraging people to vote for small parties, or to cast an invalid vote; this is what was being sought, to avoid the two-party system. I was following the events at Sol on the internet. There was a demonstration in Lleida on the 15th, but the camping out started later on here in Lleida. After the eviction from Sol, on the 16th or the 17th we started mobilising

⁵ The interview was conducted with the Brazilian youth researcher Maurício Perondi, with whom I wrote a first Spanish version of this narrative (Feixa and Nofre, *#GeneraciónIndignada*).

⁶ The complete version of this narrative, and its Spanish original version, is available at the website of CRIC: www.culturalnarratives.org.

through the net. I searched Twitter and Facebook to see if someone in Lleida was going to camp out or anything, because all the cities had mobilised in solidarity with the events at Sol. I started searching in Twitter, I searched “#acampadalleida” just to try, and I saw that some people were posting: “Hey, why don’t we organise a camp in Lleida?”. And that’s where I joined in: “Yeah, of course, let’s do something”. We were chatting for a few hours and decided to set it up. Facebook was used for dissemination, but the actual organisation was done on Twitter, mainly. I didn’t know anyone at all. Then, when we were camped I thought I could recognize their faces from the profile picture: “Hey, you’re such and such” “yeah, I am”. Twitter works through *hashtags*; you type a topic, for instance #acampadasol, talk about what you want, and those who are talking about the same thing, the same *hashtag*, appear in there. Ours was #acampadalleida. All we were saying was: “Let’s camp out”. Everyone posted their messages there, through that *hashtag*. After that, groups started to emerge, on Facebook, on Twitter, to organize everything a bit better. People joined in individually, and a few of us organized the camping on the 18th. We followed a bit what they were doing [at Sol and Catalunya], but we were not as numerous.

(...)

The *Marcha Indignada* (Indignant March) was in July.⁷ There had been talks about organising a march with several columns all over Spain, and they were all supposed to meet in Madrid. There were North-West, North-East, South-East, South-West columns... I can’t remember how many there were. It was all organised mainly through the internet. And well, it reached Lleida; there were talks about it. Some people said

⁷ The march was supposed to reach Madrid on Saturday, July 23rd 2011; therefore, they left from the different camps a few weeks earlier. According to the Zaragoza Column Road Map (the so-called Route N-II, named after the road it followed), the march left on Thursday 7th July and for 16 days they walked through the roads of Aragon and Castile (See Figure 6).

yes, I thought it was mad at the beginning: “Well, yeah, 300 km” “That’s a hell of a lot!” “Well –I said- I have to think about it”. And when the moment arrived to decide in an assembly: “Let’s see, how many people are willing to get to Madrid on foot?”. Well, in the end, in a moment of madness I said: “Come on, I’ll go”. At the beginning there were at least six people who wanted to join the column from Lleida. We wanted to do it from Lleida, and then meet up with the ones coming from Zaragoza and in parallel with those coming from Barcelona, to all meet up in Torrejón, and then to arrive in Madrid in several columns. That was the main idea. There were six of us ready to go, and we talked about how to do it, because we had to cross the Monegros, which is a desert between us and Zaragoza. There’s nowhere to stop; you can do it in one or two days, but it’s mad to do it in July. Well, in the end one said no, and then another, and I was left alone; the only one up to it. I didn’t have the experience or the capacity to make it to Zaragoza on my own, so they gave me another option: “Look there are about 50 people in Zaragoza who are going; catch a train to Zaragoza and you join them”. I said all right, because I thought it was important that somebody from Lleida joined. I prepared my rucksack and then, I can’t remember exactly what day in July, I took a train to Zaragoza; I didn’t know anyone; it was an adventure. Somebody collected me and we went to a neighbourhood assembly, and they introduced me to one person who was going to go with me. Out of all 50 people there was only one left: an Asturian who was working in Zaragoza. I didn’t know whether to take a train and come back or what, because two people only was madness. Well, I talked to the guy and we said “Let’s try it!”. On that day there was a camp out in Zaragoza in solidarity with the marchers. That night another guy, who had left from Barcelona arrived having hitchhiked to join us. That made three of us ready to make it to Madrid.⁸

⁸ According to the Route Blog, the assembly took place on Wednesday July 6th: “Today Wednesday at

The following day we got up at 6 am at our campsite, in a sort of castle they have in there. Some people walked with us as far as La Muela, the first stop. We were trying to find a place to sleep and get some shelter and people said to us “You can go this way, there’s a bit of field”. Some people came with us, especially for the logistics. The guy from Barcelona had a tent, the guy from Zaragoza and I slept rough; it was a bit cold, but anyway. The three of us were left alone at this stage. [The first day] was the worst of all; we got lost on the motorway, from La Muela to Épila. We were supposed to take a certain route, but we got lost because we didn’t have a map, only the directions people gave to us on the phone from Zaragoza. Well, we got lost, we had to cross the motorway, walk lots, we didn’t know whether we were on the right path or not, whether we should go back; we ran out of water. We walked 50 km in a 30 km stage, and we crossed places with nothing, not a bar, not a petrol station. It was depressing. After walking for about 6 hours, we managed to get to our destination almost exhausted; we couldn’t even walk. Well, when we made it there we organised an assembly with the locals, even the mayor came to our assembly. It was very good, we talked to the people and two people from that place joined us. So that made 5 of us then. Other people joined along the way, they walked for a few kilometres with us. On the following day we went to the next point and we organised an assembly, and so on ...

In those places there was no 15M movement: unless they made links with Zaragoza, we had to build ties with the people in each village; we needed at least one contact, and then organise it; then the van that was in charge of logistics got to the village, they stuck banners everywhere, they announced the assembly in the square at 8 pm. Then we

19:00 there is an assembly in the neighbourhood of La Almozara, in the Plaza de las Alcahuetas. After the assembly, around 21:00, there will be a gathering at La Almozara park, next to Aljafería, where the participants and sympathisers will spend the night. At 07:00 on Thursday, the march towards Madrid will start” (6th July, 2011 07:21). <http://marchapopularindignada.wordpress.com/ruta-noroeste-2/ruta-zaragoza/>. [Last access: 31/07/2012].

arrived walking and everything was more or less organised. When we arrived there were people who received us, gave us food, they offered us their homes for a shower, and we were grateful for that, because that stage had been hard.⁹ Then we had an assembly, we slept wherever they would let us: sometimes the city hall would provide a place, a sports hall, we would sleep anywhere. Some city halls, especially those ruled by PP, didn't [help us with accommodation], and we had to sleep in the street. After assemblies, there were always people who said: "I'm going with you to the next village", to make sure we didn't get lost like the first time on the motorway; that was mad. To avoid the motorway, people led us through secondary roads; we depended on people's good will... Walking on asphalt is very, very hard, especially in the summer. Our knees were wrecked and our feet burnt. There were people who said to us: "[There is] a path which runs parallel to the motorway, you can take that". They would take us; they would give us directions, and so on.

Another time we did have to walk 50 km or maybe more, we walked two stages in one day, because we got to a village, I can't remember the name, near [Madrid], in Castilla-La Mancha. And in that village it was impossible to organise an assembly, the mayor would not give us a place to stay, and we didn't know what we would do there. We realised it would be useless to remain in that place and decided to carry on with the following day's stage there and then, and get to Guadalajara a day earlier and have two days to rest; we really needed a rest. Two people ended up injured, their feet and their muscles were overloaded, so we ended up being two in that stage. A French girl joined us, she had started following the movement from France, and she got so interested that

⁹ The route blog is full of messages of support like the following: "I can provide food, first aid material, a place to sleep, a shower, etc. Please, if there is anything you need, just ask" (message from July 19th 2011). <http://marchapopularindignada.wordpress.com/ruta-noroeste-2/ruta-zaragoza/>. [Last access: 31/07/2012].

she finally got on a bus and came to Spain to join in the march. She was going to join in Barcelona, at first, as it was the most famous. Ours was not so well known, there were only two or three of us, and she realised it was probably more interesting because it was more intimate, and so she joined in. Being together for so many kilometres, always with the same people, we ended up being like family, and we are still in contact; I still go to Zaragoza to see them. [We talked about] a thousand things; I learnt a lot from everyone. A 78-year-old man, Antonio, also joined us for a good chunk of the way. That man was awesome: he walked with his stick, and he would even push us to walk faster. At some point he had to go back because he had a family problem, but later he joined us again and made it to Madrid with us.

Many people [compared the march with the *camino de Santiago*], but the *camino de Santiago* has religious connotations. I didn't take it like a *camino de Santiago*, but rather like a march with a lot more meaning than going to Santiago. We went from one village to another listening to the people's problems; I carried a notebook and I wrote down everything that was being talked about in the assemblies. And encouraging assemblies; some villages were so small that they didn't even know what the 15M was or who we were: "Who are you? What do you want?" It was very important to be able to gather all those problems and take them to Madrid. A list was made with all the problems that had been collected, especially topics related to food sovereignty, as many farmers could not even cover production expenses; this was the main problem, and then speculation and then despotism, the things we got to hear were amazing.

We saw everything under the sun. Some people were really thankful, they would take us home to feed us, let us have a shower, and then other people insulted us; these got to the assemblies to spoil them basically, there was everything. The greatest feeling of support was maybe in Calatayud. A girl welcomed us, took us to a sports pavilion. They

had hired the pavilion for us, they had prepared hot food, lots of drinks, it was amazing, and a lot people applauding us. That was probably the best place to stop and rest a bit and eat warm food, because we were eating what we could, what we bought at the supermarkets, what people gave us, a roll, or whatever we could get our hands on, and that day we were very thankful. Some people said: “Come home, have a shower, wash your clothes”. In Calatayud there was also 15M movement; there were supporters and they gave us this great welcome. [Rejection]: getting to a village under PP rule and being sent to hell, telling us to earn a living and to sleep in the fucking street, they were not giving us anything; and then assemblies that we organised and nobody turned up, or maybe somebody said “you losers...” or “*perroflautas*”¹⁰, and things like that. We got to hear all sorts of insults; we just ignored them. And some people got busy spoiling our assemblies, criticizing us and telling us all kinds of things.

It was very interesting to be in every village and listen to the people. Listening to what people had to say in the assemblies was memorable, like when they commented on the company of someone famous, related to the corruption, I can’t remember [the name]. Well, they got paid a few million Euros to restore this castle and then they fled with the money; all the scaffolding is standing there at the castle. “Look, since the castle is in ruins anyway, you can spend the night in there if you want”. And so we did. And then in Río Jalón, there were a lot of problems too, they wanted to change the water supply route, and that meant that a lot of people who had lands, fields and things like that would be left with no water for their fields. This was the situation: total corruption, permissions that were not legal, a councilman that had been bribed, and stuff like that. I was writing everything down in my notebook, and I wrote the minutes of every

¹⁰ Literally: “dogflute”, it would be equivalent to the expression ‘left-wing tramps’ (TN)

assembly, of all that was said. Like Ché Guevara's 'Motorcycle Diaries' (*Diarios de Motocicleta*)... Especially the fact that it all went to Congress and it was read; I think it was Llamazares who read it. I didn't see it on TV because I was in Madrid. When we got to Madrid we camped at el Prado, and then the police cordoned it off because the Congress is beside el Prado. And when they saw us with our looks, they said: "You're not getting in". And you had to take the long path to get out of there. Two guys from the Barcelona march had suits, I don't know where they got them, but they dressed up and talked to the police: "We're going to a hotel nearby". And they let them through, they got to the Congress somehow, and they gave away the sheets with all the notes on them.

(...)

We walked for 314 km, from Zaragoza to Madrid, in two weeks or ten days, I can't remember. There was a [column] from Barcelona that had left earlier, that was the Northeast column. The idea was to march in parallel and then meet up in Torrejón, a town near Madrid. Then another one left from Granada, another one from Teruel, another one from the Northwest, and I don't know how many there were from the South, and I think one from Valencia.¹¹ Three of us left from Zaragoza, in some stages there were two of us, and then the people that joined us for a stage or two and then they had to go because they had to work, they had family obligations and they could not do the whole march, but they helped us in their own way. And then at last, in a city after Torrejón, which is like a suburb in the outskirts of Madrid, a group of people from Lleida joined us. We were not alone at that stage; we were with the people from

¹¹ According to the Popular Indignant March webpage, there were 6 main columns: North-Western (Galicia and Asturias), Northern (Euskadi, Nafarroa, Rioja), North-Eastern (Barcelona), Eastern (Valencia), Southern (Andalucía) and an Extremaduran column, along with several sub-routes (such as the column from the Canaries, from the South-East (Málaga), Murcia and Zaragoza or the N-II road). (See Figure 1).

Barcelona and Teruel, who also joined in. We marched to the end, met up with the other columns from the South and there were lots of us then, an awful lot of people; from Barcelona maybe 200 marchers [maybe about a thousand in total]. As we were advancing more people joined in, and then in the end you didn't know who was from the marches from Zaragoza, Barcelona, Madrid...

[The last day] was awesome; that day we walked like never before, we walked through Madrid and when we got to Sol it was awesome; it was all decorated, with lots of banners: "*Vamos despacio porque vamos lejos*" (We're walking slowly because we're going far). This was mainly the march slogan. I couldn't believe I had made it there on foot. It was hard, because when you get to Madrid you don't get to Sol. That's so enormous; we had to cross through neighbourhoods. We got to Sol exhausted; we couldn't do anything, not an assembly, nothing. It was also completely different; I didn't even like it so much, I have to say. From being five people camping to being so many was good in a way, but we were used to being so few, and then being so many, with no privacy, was a radical change, but anyway. It was something mad to do; I was so tired, there were a thousand assemblies; there was an assembly to prepare the next. It was not very well organised, which is normal when there are so many people. I was used to Lleida, there were only a few of us and we were organised. Over there assemblies were held all day long: morning, afternoon, evening; I just wanted to rest. We were camped there for 3 or 4 days and I left before the end; communication had been made and I couldn't see the point in remaining there, so in the end I left: I got on a train and travelled to Cuenca; my family were in Cuenca.

(...)

[Figures to be included before across the Narrative]

Figure 2. The Indignant Camp: Assembly at Catalonia Square. Photo by Andreu Romaní (2011)¹²
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/l9ow2sfzgxex0s/2.jpeg?dl=0>

Figure 3a. This is not a crisis, it's a fraud. 15M Camp in Barcelona. Photo by Carles Feixa (2011)
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/bti0prewnw00ilh/3a.jpeg?dl=0>

Figure 3b. We are the pre-pared/ pre-unemployed Generation. Photo by Carles Feixa (2011)
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/8vr825uwm6lrglq/3b.jpeg?dl=0>

Figure 4. Itinerary of Route N-II of the *Marcha Popular Indignada*.
<http://marchapopularindignada.wordpress.com/ruta-noroeste-2/ruta-zaragoza/>. [Last access: 31/07/2012].
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/c6coz4qudyihllr/4.jpg?dl=0>

Figure 5. El camino de Sol: la Marcha Popular Indignada, Top left:
<http://acampanalon.wordpress.com/2011/11/23/marcha-popular-indignada-ruta-noroeste-asturias-madrid-30-junio-22-julio/>. Top right: <http://marchaindignadasureste.blogspot.pt/>.
 Bottom left: <http://www.unfotografo.es/2011/fotografias-marcha-indignada-manifestacion-madrid>.
 Bottom right: <http://www.unfotografo.es/2011/fotografias-marcha-indignada-manifestacion-madrid>. [Last access: 21/03/2012]
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/hn5aa8vbgpiub3q/5.jpg?dl=0>

Figure 6. Itinerary of Route N-II of the *Marcha Popular Indignada*.
<http://marchapopularindignada.wordpress.com/ruta-noroeste-2/ruta-zaragoza/>. [Last access: 31/07/2012].

Stage	Date Foreseen	Origin	Destination	Km Stage
1	06/Jul			
2	07/Jul	Zaragoza	La Muela	29,8
		La Muela	Épila	
3	08/Jul	Épila	La Almunia de Doña Godina	28,6
4	09/Jul	La Almunia de Doña Godina	El Frasno	20,2
5	10/Jul	El Frasno	Calatayud	22
6	11/Jul	Calatayud	Ateca	17,6
7	12/Jul	Ateca	Ariza	26,7
8	13/Jul	Ariza	Arcos de jalón	26,7
9	14/Jul	Arcos de jalón	Medinaceli	21,3

¹² The complete collection of photographs of the 15M Camp at Catalonia Square by Andreu Romaní could be seen at the website of the CRIC Project: www.culturalnarratives.org.

10	15/Jul	Medinaceli	Alcolea del pinar	19,1
11	16/Jul	Alcolea del pinar	Sigüenza	23
12	17/Jul	Sigüenza	Mirabueno	23,5
	18/Jul	Mirabueno	Trijueque	31,5
	19/Jul	Trijueque	Guadalajara	24,1
13	20/Jul	Guadalajara	Alcalá de Henares	24
14	21/Jul	Alcalá de Henares	Torrejón de Ardoz	13,1
15	22/Jul	Torrejón de Ardoz	Madrid	28,9
16	23/Jul	Madrid	Madrid	23

Conclusion: On Chronotopes, Pilgrimages and Youthtopias

Utopia is on the horizon. I walk two steps; it gets two steps further and the horizon ten steps more. Then, what purpose does the utopia serve? Exactly that; it's for walking. (Eduardo Galeano, *El libro de los abrazos*)

In the later “Concluding Remarks” of his seminal essay, Bakhtin (243-252) proposed five “major chronotopes”: the Road, the Castle, the Salon, the Town and the Threshold. In a recent work (Feixa, Leccardi and Nilan, 1-18), we have proposed to adapt these chronotopes to the contemporary experience of youth in the global city, arguing that they match some ‘narrative’ trends of youth studies: the Road would represent the experience of travelling and migrating (approached through mobility studies); the Castle would represent power and resistances to it (approached through political studies); the Salon would represent online and offline social networks (approached through cultural studies); the Town would represent inclusion and exclusion in the global city (approached through urban studies); and the Threshold would represent the rites of passage to adulthood (approached through transition studies). In fact, Bakhtin referred

to “an unlimited number of minor chronotopes” (252) that could emerge from the dialogical imagination.

Guillermo’s narrative could be analysed through the model of the Road chronotope suggested by Bakhtin. According to the writer, the literary model for this chronotope was *Don Quixotte* by Cervantes, but also *On the Road* by Kerouak. That is: the journeys of two lucid and foolish heroes across 17th century Castile and 20th century America, a counter-cultural journey whose texts express the essence of their respective contexts: the crisis of pre-modern Spain and the crisis of post-modern America.¹³ The chronotope of the *Road* is a particularly good place for random encounters where people “who are normally kept separate by social and spatial distance can accidentally meet” (Bakhtin, 243). The Road is both a point for new departures and a place for events to find their declaration. In these spaces time has a *flowing* shape and actors participate in creative forms of action, emphasising process and experimentation. The Road is a suitable space for direct democracy and flexible forms of commitment (Laine, 65-84).

Guillermo’s life story describes the spacetime implosion and explosion during the three months that the *Indignados* representation lasted. It also describes the passage from crisis of identity to crisis of authority in Gramscian terms, and from crisis to renewal in personal (subjective) and social (political) terms. The story is organized around three spaces: the square of departure (Ricard Vinyes in Lleida), the square of destination (Sol in Madrid) and the route that connects them (what I have called the *Camino de Sol*). These three additional spaces evoke temporality: the daily time camping and walking (the indignant path); the biographic time in the life history (the path to adulthood); and the social time of the protest (the path towards “new politics”).

¹³ Another example of Route chronotope evoqued by Guillermo is *The Motorcycle Diary* by Ernesto Ché Guevara, the journey of another lucid and crazy revolutionary throughout South America.

The starting point is the awareness of an "identity crisis" -blocking the chances of successful transition to the emancipation from the family and from adult institutions- and a "crisis of authority" -the exhaustion of the political *status quo* in place in Spain since the transition to democracy between 1975 and 1982.¹⁴ The point of arrival is the outline of a possibility of renewal, both personal -activism as a project that gives meaning to life-, and collective -end of bipartisanship and the emergence of new ways of doing politics. The imaginary line connecting these two points is experienced in three intense micro-utopian spatiotemporal realities: the face-to-face camping revolution, the e-revolution of the social networks and the revolution-in-movement of the Indignant Popular March.

The experience of groups of people marching from different places with a common destination evokes the classical religious experience of the pilgrimage., The greatest example of this in Spain is the *Camino de Santiago*, which has attracted thousands of pilgrims coming from all over Europe since the middle ages, and in recent years has become a reference for global cultural tourism.¹⁵ When we ask Guillermo about this parallelism he is surprised and denies any spiritual content. However his account of the *Camino de Sol*, between the effort and the adventure, the hunger and the tiredness, the dialogues with his fellow travellers and the people in the villages they pass through and where they sleep, the intercultural and international composition of the marchers, and their final entry into Plaza del Sol, such as in Plaza del Obradoiro in a *finis terrae* on the mainland, is like the fulfilment of a civic promise, the ritualization of a festive and yet revindicative appropriation of the place. The colonization of a *terra incognita* had taken

¹⁴ A suggestive analysis of the same period, based on Walter Benjamin work, could be found in a recent article of RQ (Mourenza, "El Roto: A political cartoonist in late capitalist Spain").

¹⁵ The academic literature about the "Camino de Santiago" is very extensive. We will cite only a beautiful anthropological reflection published precisely the same year of the 15M (Prat, 495-529).

place two months earlier, on the 15M, when the *hashtag* #spanishrevolution had become a trending topic in the social networks. Guillermo differentiates between two types of pilgrimage: while the *Camino de Santiago* pursues an individual goal (religious, existential, cultural...), the *Camino de Sol* pursues a collective goal (to listen to the people, to gather the peoples' complaints, to renovate democracy). It can be conceived as an attempt to bridge the gap between peripheral and central Spain, between urban and rural Spain, between young and adult Spain, between mass mediated and face-to-face communication. It can also be conceived as a ritualization of the end of *Ciudad de Sol*, a farewell to the visible camping and a return to the more invisible work in the neighbourhoods and the daily realities of life.

The City of Sun is the title of the classical utopia written by Tommaso di Campanella in 1523. In fact, the narratives about Camp cities would be seen as post-modern expressions of the classic utopias by More and Bacon or modern utopias by Saint-Simon and Owen.¹⁶ That is: the critique of the real city through the lens of an imagined city, based on rules like life in common, the abolishment of private property, the challenge from vertical to horizontal relationships and the hope for happiness and renewal. By comparing camps and occupations in Spain, Greece, Egypt, Chile, Brazil, Colombia and the US during the 2011 protests, we suggested that juvenile narrations expressed a kind of (precarious) Youthtopia where time is suspended in small spaces were “another world is possible” (Feixa, Leccardi and Nilan, 415-420). A Youthtopia that introduces a “chronoschism” in postmodern narrative (Heise, 30).¹⁷

¹⁶ See the reader *Utopías del renacimiento* (VVAA), with a useful introduction by Imaz.

¹⁷ In his youthful essay “Metaphysik der Jugend”, written during his university years in 1914, Walter Benjamin expressed the capacity of youth to prefigure new trends in social and cultural renewal.

The Road chronotope could also be interpreted under the model of the Rite-of-Passage. In Arnold Van Gennep's terms, it expresses the dialogical connection between normality and liminality in the life cycle (the Pilgrimage as a way of initiation or spiritual conversion). In Victor Turner's terms, it expresses the dialogical connection between *structure* and *communitas* in social dramas (the Pilgrimage as a way of transformation of the political actors into new roles). Nevertheless, more than a rite-of-passage, Guillermo's narrative evokes a rite-of-impasse: the barriers and challenges of building new kinds of juvenile and political identities from zero: Can I –become- a renewed adult? Can we –become- a renewed political movement? Does my generation have a future or have we No future? The road from crisis to renewal is also the road from macroutopia to microutopias, from the liminal days of camping and pilgrimage to everyday life. But this is another story.

Postscript

On May 15 2017, the sixth anniversary of the 15M, as I was proof-reading this article, I was summoned through the social networks to an informal gathering at Ricard Vinyes Square in Lleida, under the slogan "#SeguimIndignats (#WeAreStillIndignant). I met there some of the people that participated in the camp in 2011. One of the first to take the floor was Guillermo: he recalled his particular "camino de Sol" and he renewed his commitment with social renewal. At the end of the gathering, I talked with him and he told me that he had been working and studying part-time last year: next june he will finally finish his studies and become a primary school teacher. His pilgrimage to adult life will reach a new stage.

References

- Bacon, Francis. "Nueva Atlántida." [New Atlantida]. 1627. In VVAA, *Utopías del renacimiento*. México: FCE, 1980. Print.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail. "Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel." 1936-38. In *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M Bakhtin*, edited by M. Holquist, translated by C. Emerson and M. Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. Print.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Metafísica de la juventud*. 1912-14. Barcelona: Paidós, 1993. Print [*Metaphysics of Youth, Writings 1912-1926*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996. Print].
- Campanella, Tomasso di. "La ciudad del Sol." [The city of Sun]. 1623. In VVAA, *Utopías del renacimiento*. México: FCE, 1980. Print.
- Feixa, Carles et al. "The #spanishrevolution and Beyond". *Fieldsights - Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology Online*, February 14, 2013. Web. <<http://www.culanth.org/fieldsights/68-the-spanishrevolution-and-beyond>>.
- Feixa, Carles, and Nofre, Jordi (Eds.) *#GeneraciónIndignada. Topías y utopías del 15M* [#Indignant Generation. Topías and Utopías of the 15M]. Lleida: Milenio, 2013. Print.
- Feixa, Carles, Leccardi, Carmen, and Nilan, Pam. (Eds.) *Youth, Space and Time. Agoras and Chronotopes in the Global City*. Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2016. Print.
- Feixa, Carles. *De jóvenes, bandas y tribus* [On youth, gangs and tribes]. Barcelona, Ariel, 1998.
- Fernández-Planells, Ariadna, Figueras, Monica and Feixa, Carles. "Communication among young people in the #spanishrevolution. Uses of the online-offline tools to obtain information in the #acampadabcn." *New Media & Society* 16.8 (2014): 1287-1308. Print.
- Galeano, Eduardo. *El libro de los abrazos* [The book of hugs]. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 1993. Print.
- Gramsci, Antonio. *Quaderni del carcere*. 1949. Torino: Einaudi, 1975. Print. [*Selection from the Prison Notebooks*. London: ElecBook, 1999. Web. <http://courses.justice.eku.edu/pls330_louis/docs/gramsci-prison-notebooks-vol1.pdf>].
- Hall, Stuart et al. *Resistance through rituals: Youth subcultures in Post-war Britain*. 1977. London and New York: Routledge, 2008.
- Heise, Ursula. *Chronoschisms. Time, Narrative and Postmodernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Print.
- Laine, Sofia. "Forming Agora chronotopes from young people's political participation in transnational meetings." In *Youth, Space and Time. Agoras and Chronotopes in the Global City*, edited by C. Feixa, C. Leccardi and P. Nilan. Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2016. 65-84. Print.
- More, Thomas. "Utopia." 1516. In VVAA, *Utopías del renacimiento*. México: FCE, 1980. Print.
- Mourenza, Daniel. "El Roto: A political cartoonist in late capitalist Spain." *Romance Quarterly* 63.2 (2016): 83-96.
- Prat, Joan. "¿Por qué caminan? Una mirada antropológica sobre el Camino de Santiago." [Why do they walk? An anthropological look to the Camino de Santiago]. In A.M. Nogués and F. Checa (Coords.), *La cultura sentida. Homenaje al profesor Salvador Rodríguez Becerra*. Sevilla: Ediciones Signatura Demos, 2011. 495-529. Print.
- Soler, P., Planas, A., Feixa, C. "Youth and youth policies in Spain in times of austerity: between juggling and the trapeze." *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth* 19.1 (2014): 62-78.
- Turner, Victor. *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- Van Gennep, Arnold. *The Rites of Passage*. 1909. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961.
- VV.AA. *Utopías del renacimiento* [Utopias of the Renaissance]. 1941. Madrid: FCE. Preliminary study by E. Imaz, 1980. Print.